



Royal Flush or Not?

Understanding Royalty, Nobility and Gentry

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Definition of Royalty and Nobility

The difference between royalty and nobility is that royalty “means that they were born into their position. Therefore only the king and queen and their direct relations can be considered royalty. ... Nobility is a title conferred on a person if they meet certain requirements.”

“The Aristocracy of England,” <http://www.aristocracyuk.co.uk/>

Royalty

Definition of royalty is people of royal blood or status.

Ranks of Royalty –

King or Queen

Prince

Princess

The royal family includes the immediate royal heirs as well as the extended family. Many also hold noble titles such as the Duke of Cornwall, which the heir apparent to the throne, and the Duke of York, as well as the Duke of Cambridge. www.royal.gov.uk

Nobility

Originally, nobility grew out of the feudal warrior classes. Nobles and knights were warriors who swore allegiance to the king in exchange for land.

“Peers, Peeresses and other People,” www.avictorian.com/nobility.html

“...hereditary permanent rank is what most Englishmen prize above all earthly honours. It is the permanency, especially, that they value.” Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914*, p. 92

Noble Titles and Order of Precedence –

Duke

Marquess

Earl

Viscount

Baron

A peer of the realm is someone who holds one or more of the above titles. The peerage is a continuation of the original baronage system which existed in feudal times.

“Historically the peerage formed a tightly knit group of powerful nobles, inter-related through blood and marriage in successive generations...” *Debrett's Essential Guide to the Peerage* and Wikipedia

In Scots law, there are certain titles that are recognized by the Crown as almost comparable to but not quite at the level of the peerage. These titles include:

Chiefs of Clans (Highlands)
Chiefs of Names (Lowlands)

Debrett's Essential Guide to the Peerage

Aristocracy

What is the aristocracy?

It is the highest class in certain societies, especially those holding hereditary titles or offices.

Peerage vs. Baronage

The peerage is the modern continuation of the baronage system which existed in feudal times.

Baronetage and Knightage

Baronets are neither members of the peerage nor of the knightage. As holders of a hereditary dignity, in precedence they are above all knights except for Knights of the Garter in England and Knights of the Thistle in Scotland. Because of their title, they are allowed to use “Sir” in front of their names. *Debrett's Essential Guide to the Peerage* and Wikipedia

“The Knightage is the collective term for Knights Bachelor, and Knights and Dames of the Orders of Chivalry. Knights and Dames are titles conferred by the Crown, and are for life only.” Today there are around 3,000 living knights and dames.

Debrett's Essential Guide to the Peerage

Gentry

Landed gentry consisted of land owners who could live entirely off rental income. Gentry included four different groups in England. They were:

1. Baronets – a hereditary title originally created by King James in 1611.
2. Knights – originally a military rank, this status was increasingly awarded to civilians as a reward for service to the crown.
3. Esquires – by custom held by certain office holders such as barristers, justices of peace, and higher ranked officer in the military.
4. Gentlemen – generally men of high birth or rank, good social standing, and wealth, who did not need to work for a living. Wikipedia

In Scotland, Laird is a generic name for landed gentry and holds the same social rank.

Rankings and Numbers of the Nobility

Each of the countries have rankings in precedence of their peers

England

Duke

The Duke of Cornwall Created 1337 Always held by the eldest son of the monarch

The Duke of Norfolk Created 1483 Premier Duke of England

The Marquess of Winchester Created 1551 Premier Marquess of England

The Earl of Shrewsbury Created 1442

The Viscount Hereford Created 1550 Premier Viscount of England

The Baron de Ros Created 1264 Premier Baron of England

Ireland

The Duke of Leinster Created 1766

The Marquess of Waterford Created 1789

The Earl of Cork & Orrey Created 1620

The Viscount Gormanston Created 1478

The Lord Kingsale Created 1397

Scotland

The Duke of Rothesay Created 1398 Usually Prince of Wales as heir to the throne

The Duke of Hamilton Created 1643

The Marquess of Hunt Created 1599

The Countess of Sutherland Created 1230

The Earl of Crawford Created 1398

The Viscount Falkland Created 1620

The Lord Forbes Created 1442

Wales

No existing Duke

The Marquess of Powis Created 1687

The Earl of Glamorgan Created 1093 & 1217, etc.

The Viscount Powis

The Baron Abergavenny Created 1087 & 1392

Welsh Terms for Titles –

Title	Male Singular	Female Singular
Prince	Tywysog	Tywysoges
Duke	Duc, Dug	Duces, Duges
Marquess	Ardalydd	Ardalyddes
Earl	Iarll	Iarlles
Viscount	Isiarll	Isiarlles
Baron	Barwn	Barwnes
Baronet	Barwnig	Barwniges

The number of ducal families in British history is twenty-six.

Masters, The Dukes: The Origins, Ennoblement and History of 26 Families

The English Peerage by the Numbers

Date	Dukes	Marquesses	Earls	Viscounts	Barons	Total (including women)
1658	2	2	55	7	53	119
1700					173	
1753	21	1	82	12	60	185
1800	19	11	87	15	125	267
1850	20	21	116	22	220	399
1900	22	22	124	30	324	522

Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914*, p. 486-487

What Does All of this Mean?

Everyone descends from nobility and royalty!

"There is an extremely high probability that a modern English person with predominantly English ancestry descends from Edward III, at a very minimum over 99%, and more likely very close to 100%."

There must be, around the globe, at least 100 million descendants of Edward III.

<https://community.dur.ac.uk/a.r.millard/genealogy/EdwardIIIDescent.php>

Other sources estimate it is around 80% of England's modern population that descends from Edward III. Matt Crenson, "Star Is Descended From Kings. Of Course, Most People Are," *The Washington Post* (13 August 2006)

Three million men are estimated to be direct descendants of Niall of the Nine Hostages. Imagine how many descendants when adding all of the women and indirect male descendants.

"3 million people in the world are descended from one Irish High King," IrishCentral.com

Helpful Sources and Websites

Books and Films

Be sure to search under the country of interest, England, Ireland, etc. – Nobility

Burke's Landed Gentry 942 D2buf and 942 D2bug

Burke's Landed Gentry of Great Britain British film 1696601 item 1

Burke's Peerage, Baronetage, & Knightage 942 D22bur

A Complete English Peerage 942 D22ja

The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, extant, extinct, or dormant 942 D22cok, vols. 1-14

Debrett's peerage, baronetage, knightage, and companionage... 942 D22dib

Irish Pedigrees 941.5 D2oha

Internet Websites

www.almanachdegotha.org

www.angelfire.com/realms3/ruvignyplus/index.html -- Descendants of Edward III

www.ancestry.com

The Royal Collection
www.burkespeerage.com
www.debretts.com
www.hereditarytitles.com
www.thepeerage.com
www.ukdukes.com